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AUTHOR Kindred, Elizabeth M.
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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on a program for mainstreaming acoustically handicapped high school students. Among aspects discussed are criteria for success in mainstreamed programs, itinerant speech therapy services, individualized education programs, and support staff (counselors) roles and functions. The scope of orientation sessions for regular class teachers is described. Seven characteristics of successfully mainstreamed students are listed (e.g., self motivation, good study habits, and high-average or high scholastic ability). Among advantages ascribed to mainstreaming are elimination of bias and misconceptions about hearing impairment and increased socialization. The author praises the parents' interest, involvement, and helpfulness in cooperating with the school program. (CL)

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MAINSTREAMING TEENAGERS WITH CARE!

Abstract: This article is based upon my nine years of personal experience and observation in Arlington County's secondary schools (Virginia). Our successful techniques for careful mainstreaming of acoustically handicapped teenagers are presented. Many of the factors also will be useful in mainstreaming Learning Disability, Mentally Retarded, and Emotionally Disturbed students. Some questions that are discussed are:

1. What team effort is required?
2. How should future mainstreamed students and their teachers be prepared?
3. Before partially or totally mainstreaming, how can a teenager be evaluated to forecast success?
4. What are problems that teenagers may encounter? How may their secondary school social, educational, and/or work life be be affected by mainstreaming?

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Elizabeth M. Kindred
Teacher, SRC Hearing Impaired Program
Yorktown High School
(Arlington County School)
5201 North 28th Street
Arlington, Virginia 22207

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MAINSTREAMING TEENAGERS WITH CARE!

Any successful mainstreaming program for accoustically impaired students is a challenge. According to Public Law #94-142 the phrase "least restrictive environment" must be carefully defined by the educators (Denton, 1978; DeSalle, Ptasnik, 1976; Greenberg, Doolittle, 1977; Gallaudet Appendix, 1975; Gillespie, 1978). This phrase must be well thought out with each individual student in mind, after perusing and assessing individual test scores, academic grades, psychological and sociological evaluations. If possible, also confer with the current teacher or teachers of the student before any new tentative appropriate schedule of courses is planned for the following year (Bitter, Johnson et al, 1972). One or more individual counseling sessions with each student and her or his parents is usually necessary before a schedule is approved and signed by the parent (Maeroff, 1979).

Administrative Support

To have a successful mainstreamed program for teenagers, full administrative support is absolutely required (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Kindred, 1976; Martin, 1974). Only administrators can permit flexible scheduling and time for staff orientations early in the fall. Without administrative assistance, none of the many needs can be obtained. Some of these needs are: appropriate sensitive mainstream teachers with empathy (Bernstein, 1974; Doran, 1972; Ezold, Boss, 1978; Northcott, 1973); small classes (Gillespie, 1978; 60 Minutes, 1979); suitable classrooms;

interpreter-aides or interpreters (Harkins, 1978); necessary books and supplies; substitute time to visit classes and/or attend eligibility conferences, necessary orientations and unforeseen meetings. Actually, without the principal's full support no school program can be completely successful (Bitter, Johnson, et al, 1972; DeSalle, Ptasnik, 1976)!

Our School

My experience has been at the secondary school level in Arlington County, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. Prior to my organizing the program at Yorktown High School in 1971, Arlington had an Itinerant Resource Teacher who went to Arlington's three high schools and a few other schools to teach remedial speech and speechreading (lipreading) as well as to tutor students having difficulty in their mainstreamed courses. When the county school authorities made the official decision that the scattered hearing impaired students could be better served in one high school educational program, this Hearing Center was established. At this time, Yorktown, a hearing public school, services the county's high school hearing impaired population and students who are bussed in from nearby school districts where no special program is available. Our hearing impaired program is part of a Yorktown Student Resource Center (SRC) for special education. The total ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students number 1,493, and many races comprise this population of the upper, middle and lower income levels. On our Yorktown staff are eighty-eight teachers, four librarians, seven counselors, and a Director of Guidance, who works with the special education students. Our high school offers various courses including college-preparatory and skilled occupational

training. Each day most skilled courses are attained, via bussing, at our Arlington County Career Center, where interpreters assist our students.

Student Courses

Mainstreaming into courses varies with the students so that each individual may be successful in attaining the best appropriate education according to the individual's capabilities, needs, and interests (Gillespie, 1978; Greenberg, Doolittle, 1977). Some students are partially mainstreamed and others are mainstreamed entirely except for Speech Therapy. Our hearing impaired teenagers have been successfully mainstreamed into one or more courses in: Art (fine art or arts and crafts), Auto Body Repair and also Auto Mechanics, Business (typing, bookkeeping, business mathematics, vocational office training. A number of graduates have permanent Civil Service appointments and work for some Virginia or District of Columbia federal government office), Distributive Education (ones with intelligible speech and who want to sell), Electricity, Graphic Arts (planning and sketching advertisements and/or layouts, etc.), Home Economics (cooking, child development, fashion design, sewing, teen living), Horticulture, Industrial Cooperative Training (learn work skills and actually work in a bicycle repair shop, Sears auto shop, etc.), Mathematics, Mechanical Drawing, Woodworking, Physical Education (some students may need extra assistance with the two years of health which is required).

How is a decision made concerning the successful mainstreaming of a student? If the responsible, confident student is socially mature to change into a class two or three times larger than the self-contained class, a

scrutiny is made of (1) the student's academic grades and spring test scores and (2) the average reading and skills level of the class into which mainstreaming is considered. Hence, before mainstreaming, it is known that the student can experience success in the regular course. This student must have a good attendance record and be willing to complete classwork and homework promptly as well as to pay close attention in class (at times oral hearing impaired may need to move desks in order to speechread class discussions). Usually the students need a high average or high scholastic ability (Bernstein, 1974; Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Katz, Mathis, Merrill, 1974; Northcott, 1973; Reich, Hambleton, Houldin, 1977) to succeed in the following courses: English, Foreign Languages (Latin and Spanish have been studied, but the former is easier since it is not spoken), higher Mathematics and Science, Psychology (college-level textbooks are used), Social Studies (Virginia-United States Government seems to be the hardest course), or Advanced Placement Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies. With successful mainstreaming a student should improve both socially and academically (Reich, Hambleton, Houldin, 1977).

If a student wants to sign up for a required mainstreamed course in which our program/teacher coordinator thinks the student will not be successful, the student is asked to schedule the class at the same time that the course is taught in our self-contained classroom. Thus, with the courses "back-to-back", the student can fall back into our course, if the mainstreamed course proves too difficult (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Doran, 1972; Kindred, 1976; Martin, 1974).

When a teenager is almost ready for a regular class, but he or she lacks self-confidence, during the year our teacher works with him or her on any skills in which inadequacy is felt and tries to build up the self-confidence. Then when our students are mainstreamed, they experience success in their regular classes. However, if they require any tutoring, they know that they can come in at lunch or before or after school for assistance. If much assistance is required, we help the parents in locating a student or teacher to tutor the student outside of school.

Our special program varies each year with the annual enrollment (it has been from three to twenty students) and the students' requirements. Biweekly, an Itinerant Speech Therapist provides all students with speech lessons to improve the intelligibility of their speech (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Kopchick, 1977; Neyhus, Austin (Editors), 1978; Reich, Hambleton, Houldin, 1977). Provision, as necessary, is made for team-teaching with regular teachers, tutoring, counseling for students and parents (Kindred, 1976; Kopchick, 1977). . .also for teachers, and for SRC self-contained courses. SRC teaching materials may require partial rewriting, or adapting, especially for Virginia-United States Government. Fortunately, in the SRC classroom are a new, easily-read encyclopedia, atlases, and maps which are in constant use. . .especially the encyclopedia.

In the SRC classes the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) demands vary with the students' abilities (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Maeroff, 1979; Martin, 1974). Additional assignments are requested of capable students for the same academic grade of "B" or "C". Few "A's" are earned in English because it is not desirable for students to overestimate

their abilities and skills and be completely discouraged when they earn a "C" or "D" in a regular English class, since language is usually very difficult for most accoustically impaired teenagers.

Support Staff

Counselors are very important to the hearing impaired students (Bitter, Johnson, et al, 1972; Harkins, 1978) and most counseling of special education students is accomplished by our new Director of Guidance. This is an improvement over previous years when the students were scattered among many counselors. However, since our director does not know Total Communication, the communication method used by most of our present students, much of the counseling with the students before school or in their lunch hour and with the parents in the evenings is usually accomplished by our teacher-coordinator who is a professional counselor. In the SRC classroom are (1) catalogs for various post-secondary schools and colleges for the hearing impaired students and (2) college entrance tests which are administered whenever required (early in each year, Gallaudet College sends out its tests to be administered to prospective applicants).

Teachers of our mainstreamed students have always been most cooperative, and good rapport has been maintained with the entire faculty. The fall orientation* is attended by our students' regular teachers so that they can review their knowledge of speechreading and general facts about the deaf, to obtain special notebooks with carbon paper for class notetakers. During the year, as needed, conferences are held with their teachers, or their classes may be visited (Bitter, Johnson, et al, 1972).

*See Fall Orientations

To "handpick" future teachers for mainstreaming purposes, I contact instructors with whom students want to be mainstreamed in order to find out if the teacher can be easily speechread and if the class itself would be suitable or overpowering. When the program was initiated and I was not familiar with the teachers and their methods of instruction, future teachers for our students were often located by consulting counselors or other experienced school personnel. Compassionate teachers who will welcome the deaf or hard of hearing and will not strenuously object to the extra work are the ones that we try to find (Ezold, Boss, 1978). The teachers must be willing to work around any problem and listen to the parents. For best results these selected teachers are interviewed informally, approached casually, and/or consulted with about two to twelve months before scheduling a student into her or his class. No teacher has ever been requested to have a number of students added to a full class, unless we team-teach.

Knowing that the successful mainstreaming of teenagers is partially or even greatly dependent upon public relations, consciously our adaptable teachers work for good rapport with all of the school personnel, with parents, and also with the community (Bernstein, 1974; Bitter, Johnson, et al, 1972; Harkins, 1978). We become acquainted with all the staff--administrators, faculty, aides, office personnel, custodians, and sometimes a few bus drivers. We try to eat with the teachers at our lunch hour and stop occasionally to chat in the halls. Each year we volunteer for one or more school committees and/or to be a representative or alternate representative to our local Arlington Education Association. Sign Language classes have been held weekly after school for several

years since our program is swinging from Oral to Total Communication (DeSalle, Ptasnik, 1976, suggest a Sign Language Club to increase social interaction). We attend the local parents' association meetings and have at times been an officer and/or served on association committees. Whenever possible, an active role has been assumed in local or state professional and community associations, and meetings are attended whenever time allows (this sounds like it takes time and money. It does! However, it can be helpful, informative, interesting, and even builds friendships) (Harkins, 1978).

Fall Orientations

The fall orientation on teaching and working with the hearing impaired teenagers is usually only about 30 to 45 minutes. We serve refreshments and try to include something to make the audience itself better understand what hearing impairment is like (one of the easiest and best methods for the latter is to play a band of the Zenith GETTING THROUGH 33 1/3 record, which is free from Zenith Hearing Instrument Corporation, 6501 West Grand Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60635) (Harkins, 1978; Katz, Mathis, Merrill, 1974; Kindred, 1976). We discuss the methods of communication of our teenagers--speechreading (Martin, 1974) or Sign Language (Katz, Mathis, Merrill, 1974). With the latter, an interpreter must be in the classroom with the regular class to do the interpreting, and, with the former, the teacher must always be where the student can see and read the lips and face. With either method, most hearing impaired students will need a notetaker (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Kindred, 1976) and/or class assistance, or volunteer

(Ezold, Boss, 1978), to be certain that the student understands the teacher, has the right place in the textbook, and has written down assignments and notes correctly (Harkins, 1978). Teachers are advised that mid-grading periods they will receive a one-page checklist to advise us on the progress of the student in their class or classes and if the student needs additional assistance (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974; Northcott, 1973). They are given a HINTS FOR SPEECH-READING to make it easier for them and the students. At the conclusion of the orientation, all teachers are welcome to remain and ask about their individual students.

Next fall, Glazzard's inservice method of simulation will probably be initiated. In the fall when all teachers report to Yorktown on the first day, each teacher of our students will be given a new pair of ear plugs to wear three or more hours while they shop, have a friendly conversation, and/or go to a restaurant (however, no one is to be told that the ear plugs are being worn). Then the teachers will write a one-page report on their perceptions of the sound distortions. The following week at our orientation the reports will be compared.

Dear Parents

The longer I teach the accoustically impaired teenagers, the more I admire their parents. All of my very successful mainstreamed students have had loving, understanding parents who have encouraged them to succeed scholastically and socially ever since they began school as tiny tots. The parents have challenged them; worked with their children

with speech and academic subjects; and have given them the support which has made their children feel secure.

In spite of the parents of the handicapped sometimes wanting to do otherwise, they have kept from being overindulgent and overprotective. They have developed in their sons and daughters initiative, independence, self-confidence (Bitter, Johnson, Bringhurst, 1974, and Northcott, 1973).

They have tried to provide the best possible education even if this involved selling their home and moving and sometimes even giving up a job with a limitless future. They are supportive of their child or children and the school. If extra assistance is needed, they have employed tutors and have not lost faith in their children (Harkins, 1978, concurs). They urge their children to profit by any mistakes and near failure and proceed to success.

Knowing that a group may succeed when one individual cannot be successful, the parents assembled other parents and together organized a parents' association. This association has helped financially with field trips and the purchase of some classroom supplies. Some individuals volunteer to drive on field trips.

They never lack interest in their children's activities. They often volunteer to assist with Scout troops and other youth organizations to which their teenagers may belong. They welcome groups of young people to gather in their homes for social get-togethers. Thereby, parents build the basic foundation for the teenagers socialization at an early age.

Successful Students

Summing up the qualities of our teenagers, the completely and almost fully mainstreamed teenagers have:

1. Self-motivation and a drive to succeed in school, even though sometimes twice as much time is spent on the same homework as their peers due to many having a lower reading level and/or language problems. However, their scholastic ability range is the same (Kindred, 1976; Murphy, 1979; Ezold, Boss, 1978, agree on the amount of work).

2. High-average or high scholastic ability.

3. A higher reading level than the national level of hearing impaired individuals which is 3.0+ grade level (numerical figure from LaSasso, 1978).

4. Good study habits (Murphy, 1979, agrees).

5. Adequate maturity and social skills (this may be surprising as social adjustment is often mentioned as one of the big problems in mainstreaming).

6. The qualities of flexibility, initiative, independence and self-confidence, and they are responsible for good attendance, promptness to class, and for completing homework and classwork assignments.

7. Adept speechreading (lipreading) skills usually.

Mainstreaming Advantages

Based upon eight years of experience with the mainstreaming of teenagers, I have found that successful mainstreaming can be attained, but it must be accomplished with care (Reich, Hambleton, Houldin, 1971, agree). Our students, their parents, and the school personnel must be flexible

and must have close liaison. Mainstreaming is not an easy accomplishment and involves much work, but it is worth the effort! Before and after high school graduation, both our graduates and their parents have expressed their approval of mainstreaming.

The accoustically impaired students attain competency with a wider education, improve their speech and communication skills (especially those in a work program), and are better prepared socially and culturally for their responsibilities as adults (Both Northcott, 1973, and Bitter, Johnson, and Bringhurst, 1974, agree).

At our high school there appears to be an accepting climate for our teenagers. The social interchange outside of the classroom varies with the individual students. More hearing friends are made by the friendly accoustically impaired teenagers who participate in sports, clubs, or other school activities (Greenberg, Doolittle, 1977, disagree on the social integration).

Through personal contact in and out of academic classes, bias and misconception about hearing impairment is eliminated both among the hearing students and the school staff (Greenberg, Doolittle, 1977, disagree). Hence, more socialization is noted. Some hearing students have learned Sign Language in our after-school classes and elsewhere, and sometimes these students volunteer to interpret for our teenagers. Due to the mainstreaming, the hearing Yorktown students' attitude has changed. In the future these students will be more willing to work and socialize with others who have this hidden handicap--hearing impairment (DeSalle, Ptasnik, 1976; Murphy, 1979).

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